

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
PHONE (305) 545-2400 FAX (305) 545-2418**

**INVESTIGATION REPORT**

**M.E. Case #: 88-3075**

**DATE: OCT/22/1988**

**TYPE: A**

**EDWARDS, ERICA (AKA)**

**SS#:**

**24 YEAR(S)**

**BLACK**

**FEMALE**

**D.O.B. JAN/31/1964**

**11124 N.W. 22 AVENUE, MIAMI, FLORIDA.**

**PLACE OF DEATH: IN FIELD: 79 STREET & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.**

**TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 8:00A.M. OCT/22/1988**

**INVESTIGATING AGENCY: MIAMI-DADE 538527-I/L**

**INCIDENT LOCATION: FIELD: 79 ST. & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.**

**OCT/22/1988**

**MSC**

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ACCORDING TO INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: THE DECEASED WHO WAS A KNOWN PROSTITUTE AND CRACK COCAINE ABUSER WAS LAST SEEN ALIVE ON OCTOBER 21ST, 1988 AT ABOUT 4:15 P.M. IN THE AREA OF NORTHWEST 79TH STREET AND 10TH AVENUE NEAR "TROPICANA BAR" SOLICITING FOR PROSTITUTE. SHE WAS NOT SEEN FOR THE REST OF THE DAY. ON OCTOBER 22ND, 1988 AT ABOUT 8:00 A.M. A LOCAL BUSINESSMAN DISCOVERED THE DECEASED IN THE FIELD AT ABOVE LOCATION AND NOTIFIED THE POLICE. POLICE RESPONDED TO THE SCENE UPON REQUEST. UPON THEIR ARRIVAL VIEWED HER SUPINE ON GROUND WITH NO VISIBLE TRAUMA, DOA. DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT: OCTOBER 21, 1988 OR OCTOBER 22, 1988 - TIME: UNKNOWN

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**CAUSE OF DEATH: ASPHYXIA. AMENDED BY J. H. DAVIS, M. D., CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER  
6/19/89-DJM.**

**MANNER: HOMICIDE**

**AUTOPSY**

**OCT/22/1988**

**DOCTOR: MSC**

**MORTUARY: POITIER**

**INVESTIGATOR: AJN**

**THIS REPORT MAY CONTAIN NON-VERIFIED INFORMATION  
AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-9400  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-3075 A  
DATE OCT/22/88

EDWARDS, ERICA  
24 BLACK FEMALE DOB JAN/31/64  
11124 N.W. 22 AVENUE, MIAMI, FLORIDA.

PLACE OF DEATH: IN FIELD: 79 STREET & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 8:00A.M. OCT/22/88

INVESTIGATING AGENCY: METRO #538527-1/LEFEBURE

INCIDENT LOCATION: FIELD: 79 ST. & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
OCT/22/88 A.M. SCENE M.E. MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

HISTORY:

AJN

ACCORDING TO INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: THE DECEASED WHO WAS A KNOWN PROSTITUTE AND CRACK COCAINE ABUSER WAS LAST SEEN ALIVE ON OCTOBER 21ST, 1988 AT ABOUT 4:15 P.M. IN THE AREA OF NORTHWEST 79TH STREET AND 10TH AVENUE NEAR "TROPICANA BAR" SOLICITING FOR PROSTITUTE. SHE WAS NOT SEEN FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.

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DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT: OCTOBER 21, 1988 OR OCTOBER 22, 1988 - TIME: UNKNOWN

CAUSE OF DEATH: ASPHYXIA. AMENDED BY J. H. DAVIS, M. D., CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER  
6/19/89-DJM.

MANNER: HOMICIDE DATE AUTOPSY OCT/22/88 BY MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

MORTUARY: FOITIER

AJN

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-9400  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-3075 A  
DATE OCT/22/88

EDWARDS, ERICA  
24 BLACK FEMALE DOB JAN/31/64  
11124 N.W. 22 AVENUE, MIAMI, FLORIDA.

PLACE OF DEATH: IN FIELD: 79 STREET & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
TIME OF DEATH: FOUND 8:00A.M. OCT/22/88

INVESTIGATING AGENCY: METRO #538527-I/LEFEBURE

INCIDENT LOCATION: FIELD: 79 STREE & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
~~OCT/22/88~~ *Oct 21-22, 1988* SCENE M.E. MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

HISTORY:

AJN

ACCORDING TO INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: THE DECEASED WHO WAS A KNOWN PROSTITUTE AND CRACK COCAINE ABUSER WAS LAST SEEN ALIVE ON OCTOBER 21ST, 1988 AT ABOUT 4:15 P.M. IN THE AREA OF NORTHWEST 79TH STREET AND 10TH AVENUE NEAR "TROPICANA BAR" SOLICITING FOR PROSTITUTE. SHE WAS NOT SEEN FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.

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CAUSE OF DEATH: ACUTE COCAINE INTOXICATION. REFILED: 12/09/88-DJM.

MANNER: ACCIDENT DATE AUTOPSY OCT/22/88 BY MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

AJN

To Dr M. H. Hemen

Re: 88-3075

Erica Edwards

28 March 89

Det Nelson

Met with Det Westhusing to review the crack prostitute cases. This case came up in the discussion - woman with man - later found dead.

Review of case folder photographs -

Petechiae - eyelids - conjunctiva

- Epiglottis

Mark on lower lip inside (tooth?)

History - Seen in a room. Screams heard.

Suspect - Hemodialysis

Suggest =

1. Have Dr Souverein review lip teeth plates
2. Review all case circumstances with Det LeFebvre

Over-all - Evidence favors a non-accidental manner

J. P. Davis

File reviewed,  
4/16/89

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT

CLASSIFICATION OF PENDING CASE

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER WHEN A PENDING CASE IS TO BE CLASSIFIED. MAKE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN APPROVAL BY EITHER THE CHIEF OR DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER BEFORE COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS AND CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY THE STATE.)

M.E. Case # 88-3075 Name (if known) Erica Edwards.

Cause of Death: Route Cocaine Intoxication  
(Item 24)

Due to:

Due to:

Contributory Cause:

Manner of Death: Accidental.  
(Item 27a)

How Incident Occurred:  
(Item 27d)

Rationale for Classification:

The reclassification was based on Autopsy findings, Circumstances of death and Toxicology results showing blood levels of cocaine. -- NO evidence of trauma was found during the Autopsy. -- Unspecific signs of hypoxia such as Petechiae of the epiglottis and larynx were seen but in the absence of other findings such as trauma in the neck region and defense wounds the possibility of a mechanical asphyxia was rule out. Even though the victim was HIV positive ~~no~~ evidence of AIDS was seen on microscopic sections.

Mario S. Cortez  
Medical Examiner

11 23 88  
M - D - Y  
Date

Approved by [Signature]  
11 23 88  
M - D - Y  
Date

1.3 ug/L cocaine

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
(305) 545-2400

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 11 22 88  
mo. day yr.

2:50 PM -  
time

88-3075  
M.E. Case #

Ref: Erica Edwards.

I talked to Det. Lefebvre asking if there is any further information in this case. He told me that besides the information <sup>concerning</sup> that the deceased was seen at 4:00 AM with a male in a car, later ~~the~~ <sup>she</sup> was seen to go into the ground where the victim was found ~~then~~ the victim was heard screaming according to a witness. This man has not been located. - Besides this story there is no further information. -

MSC

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METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-9400  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-3075 A  
DATE OCT/22/88

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11124 N.W. 22 AVENUE, MIAMI, FLORIDA.

PLACE OF DEATH: IN FIELD: 79 STREET & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
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INVESTIGATING AGENCY: METRO #538527-I/LEFEBURE

INCIDENT LOCATION: FIELD: 79 STREE & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
OCT/22/88 A.M. SCENE M.E. MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

HISTORY:

AJN

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CAUSE OF DEATH: PENDING TOXICOLOGY.

MANNER: UNCLASSIFIED DATE AUTOPSY OCT/22/88 BY MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

MORTUARY: POITIER

AJN

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
M E D I C A L E X A M I N E R D E P A R T M E N T  
NUMBER 1 ON BOB HOPE RD MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136 (305) 545-9400  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

M.E. CASE NO. 88-3075  
DATE OCT/22/88

EDWARDS, ERICKA  
24 BLACK FEMALE DOB JAN/31/64  
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PLACE OF DEATH: IN FIELD: 79 STREET & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
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INCIDENT LOCATION: FIELD: 79 STREE & 8TH COURT, MIAMI, FLORIDA.  
OCT/22/88 A.M. SCENE M.E. MARIA S. CONTE, M.D.

HISTORY:

AJN

ACCORDING TO INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION: THE DECEASED WHO WAS A KNOWN PROSTITUTE AND CRACK COCAINE ABUSE WAS LAST SEEN ALIVE ON OCTOBER 21ST, 1988 AT ABOUT 4:15 P.M. IN THE AREA OF NORTHWEST 79TH STREET AND 10TH AVENUE NEAR "TROPICANA BAR" SOLICITING FOR PROSTITUTE. SHE WAS NOT SEEN FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.

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CAUSE OF DEATH: *Pending toxicology Reports.* *MSC 10/22/88*

MANNER: *Unclassified*

MORTUARY:

*Maria Conte*  
*10-22-88*

AJN



DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...EDWARDS,.Erica .....Case No. 88-3075

SCENE INVESTIGATION

DATE: October 22, 1988  
LOCATION: 777 NW 79th Street  
TIME ARRIVED AT SCENE: Approximately 11:30 a.m.  
POLICE AGENCY: Metro Dade Police Dept.  
LEAD INVESTIGATOR: Detective Lefebvre  
INITIAL INFORMATION:

The victim is a known prostitute and crack user who was last seen alive yesterday afternoon along with a girlfriend.

OBSERVATIONS OF SURROUNDINGS:

The scene is in a middle class neighborhood in a field located behind a house. The area has abundant vegetation and abundant garbage. A purse, lipstick and two combs which apparently belonged to the deceased were found several feet away from the body beyond a fence that was located between the area where the victim was found and the area where her personal belongings were found. A piece of rock with some burned material over it was found adjacent to the victim.

OBSERVATIONS OF VICTIM(S):

The victim is lying supine. She is clothed in a bathing suit and a yellow shirt. She has her legs open, however, the bathing suit and the shirt are properly set. She has no money or jewelry. Significant insect activity is observed on the medial aspects of both thighs. No evidence of trauma is observed on the body.

SCENE IMPRESSION (INCLUDING PROBABLE CAUSE AND MANNER OF DEATH):

Drug overdose, accident

NOTE: The foregoing is of a speculative nature and subject to modification pending additional information and investigation.

*Maria S. Conte, M.D.*  
Maria S. Conte, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

MSC:rf

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
Office of the Medical Examiner  
INVESTIGATION REPORT

88-3075

Police Case No. 5385271

NAME OF THE DECEASED: ERICA EDWARDS Age 24 Race B Sex F

Address 11124 NW 22CT 687-2272 Date of Birth 1-31-64

Social Security No. — Occupation Prostitute Employer SELF

Place of Death 79ST NW 8CT FIELD

Death Occurred — 19 — M. in the presence of —

or Found Dead 10-22-1988, 8:00 A M. by ARMANDO GOMARA

Identified by — Address —

Date/Time Viewed by Investigator 10-22-1988, 9:30 A M. Medical Examiner at Scene An Conde

HISTORY: (What happened just prior to death and when was victim last seen alive?) VICT WAS LAST

SEEN ALIVE ON Fri eve. AT 4-5 PM IN AREA OF 79ST NW 10 Ave. TROPICANA BAR. SOLICITING. THE VICT WAS NOT SEEN THE REST OF THE EVE. VICT WAS DISCOVERED ON SAT A.M. BY BUSINESS PERSONNEL. VICT IS KNOWN PROSTITUTE AND CRACK COCAINE USER.

Possible manner of death UNCLASS.

If Violent Death: Date/Time of Incident — 19 — M. Weapon/Cal. —

Exact Location/Address of Incident — At work UNKNOWN

(Specify Street, Parking Lot, Bar etc.)

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: Clothing Blue swim suit & yellow shirt

Position/Location of Body: Supine - Head south. feet north

Lividity: Yes ☒ No ☐ Consistent yes ☒ Body Heat: Warm: ☐ Cool ☒ Cold ☐

Rigor Mortis: None ☐ Slight ☐ Full ☒ Decomposition: None ☐ Slight ☒ Advanced ☐

Trauma: Yes ☐ No ☒ Describe NONE visible

NAMES OF DOCTORS/HOSPITALS who attended deceased during life: UNKNOWN

NAME OF NEXT OF KIN: THELMA FLOWERS-WRIGHT Relation MOTHER

Address 11124 NW 22CT Telephone 687-2272 Notified: Yes ☒ No ☐

Valuables and Disposition NONE HANDLED Medication to M.E.: Yes ☐ No ☒

Investigating Agency MDDP Report Submitted by S. Lefebvre Date: 10-22-1988, 10:00 A M.

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 10-24-88  
mo. day yr.

time

88-3075  
88-3084

M.E. Case #

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

No 001939	
DATE CALL RECEIVED	TIME
<u>10-24-88</u>	<u>1:21</u>
WHO CALLED	
<u>George</u>	
FIRM	
<u>EYE BANK</u>	
CITY, STATE	
PHONE	AREA CODE
<u>266360</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> RETURN CALL, DATE, TIME	
<input type="checkbox"/> WILL CALL AGAIN, DATE, TIME	
CALL TAKEN BY	

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19th STREET  
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33136

MESSAGE FOR ....	<u>MSC</u>
------------------	------------

RE: 88-3075  
88-3084

Erica Edwards  
Sonia Ali

DAY-TIMERS RE ORDER No. 3214 — Printed in USA

Telephone call answered. George informed about the following HIV Preliminary Results:  
- 88-3075 - Preliminary Results (+) -  
- 88-3084 - Unavailable for testing -

MSC  
10/24/88

# PROPERTY RECEIPT

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19th Street  
Miami, Florida 33175  
(305) 549-7337

M.E. CASE # 88-3075  
MEDICAL EXAMINER HSC

(IF NOT KNOWN, USE UNK)

DECEDENT'S NAME: Edwards Erica

AGE 24 RACE B SEX F TYPE OF CASE Uncl

POLICE AGENCY: HDPD POLICE CASE # 538527-I

ITEM NO.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION (itemize currency by denomination)
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Shirt</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Bathing Suit</u>
<del> </del>	<del> </del>	<del> </del>
<del> </del>	<del> </del>	<del> </del>
<del> </del>	<del> </del>	<del> </del>
<del> </del>	<del> </del>	<del> </del>
<del> </del>	<del> </del>	<del> </del>
<del> </del>	<del> </del>	<del> </del>

I hereby acknowledge that the above list represents all the property impounded by me in the official performance of my duty as a Medical Examiner, District 11.

MARIA CONTE Maria Conte  
Print Sign  
DATE / TIME OBTAINED: 10 22 88 3:00 AM/PM  
MO. DAY YR. TIME

I hereby acknowledge that the above list represents all property received by/from the Medical Examiner Department.

M.E. Courier: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Sign

DATE / TIME OBTAINED: \_\_\_\_\_  
AM./PM.

Receiving Party: G. Catebure ASA Lefel MDPD  
Print Signature Agency

Date & Time Released: 11-8-88 1:45 AM/PM  
MO. DAY YR. TIME

RECEIVED BY	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED
RECEIVED BY			REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED
RECEIVED BY			REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED
RECEIVED BY			REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED

[illegible]

# PROPERTY RECEIPT

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19th Street  
Miami, Florida 33175  
(305) 549-7337

M.E. CASE # 88-3075

MEDICAL EXAMINER MSC

(IF NOT KNOWN, USE UNK)

DECEDENT'S NAME: Edwards Eric

AGE 24 RACE B SEX F TYPE OF CASE Uncl.

POLICE AGENCY: MDPD POLICE CASE # 538 527-I

ITEM NO.	QUANTITY	DESCRIPTION (itemize currency by denomination)
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>Blood Tube</u>

I hereby acknowledge that the above list represents all the property impounded by me in the official performance of my duty as a Medical Examiner, District 11.

MARIA COITE  
Print

Maria Coite  
Sign

DATE / TIME OBTAINED: 10 22 88 3:00 AM/PM.  
MO. DAY YR. TIME

I hereby acknowledge that the above list represents all property received by/from the Medical Examiner Department.

M.E. Courier: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign

DATE / TIME OBTAINED: \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM.

Receiving Party: Lefebvre  
M. D Y  
Print

[Signature] MDPD  
Agency

Date & Time Released: 11 8 88 900 AM/PM.  
MO DAY YR. TIME

RECEIVED BY	PRINT NAME	SIGNATURE	REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED
RECEIVED BY			REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED
RECEIVED BY			REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED
RECEIVED BY			REASON	DATE AND TIME RECEIVED

[illegible]

## MESSAGE CONFIRMATION

OCT-22-'88 SAT 10:35

TERM ID: MEDICAL EXAMINER P-9999

TEL NO: 305 545 2400 EXT3418

NO.	DATE	ST.TIME	TOTAL TIME	ID	DEPT CODE	OK	NG
405	10-22	10:34	00°00'42	1 305 326 7139 0001		01	00



545-8899

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19 St., Miami, FL 33136  
(305) 549-7337

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 10-22-88  
mo. day yr.

9:25  
AM  
time

M.E. Case #

M.D.P.D.  
UNIT # 639  
Pos # 17  
596-8117

M.E. Doctor  
777 N.W. 79 St.  
HOMICIDE

DR. CONTE NOTIFIED

9:26 AM

Wagon  
10:20 AM  
JON

B 611E

# POITIER FUNERAL HOME

2300 NORTHWEST 62ND STREET

MIAMI, FLORIDA 33147

(305) 638-5030 or 638-5031

BERNARD C. POITIER, SR. & ALFONSO M. RICHARDSON  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS

## AUTHORIZATION

*M.E.*

I hereby designate the above-named funeral establishment to take charge of funeral arrangements for: ERICA EDWARDS,

and I authorize the release and removal of the remains to said funeral establishment for the purpose of embalming.

I represent that I am the next of kin, or am acting as an authorized agent for the next of kin.

Signed: Shelma Flowers Wright  
Relationship: MOTHER

Co-Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS:

A. Suban

DATE:

10-22-88

## FOR VERBAL (TELEPHONE) AUTHORIZATION:

Authorization from \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Received by \_\_\_\_\_

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER  
MIAMI, FLORIDA

DECEASED'S VALUABLES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY RECORD

88-3075

88-3075

NAME OF DECEASED EDWARDS, ERICA

M.E. CASE NO. 88-3075

TIME 11:40 AM

DATE 10-22-88

AGE 24

RACE B

SEX F

HEIGHT 5-4

DOB 1-31-64

131

WEIGHT (with clothes) (without clothes) (with wet clothes)

FINGERPRINTED: YES ☒

NO

MALE

CLOTHES

FEMALE

SHOES SOCKS

SHOES STOCKINGS SOCKS

JACKET SWEATER

COAT SWEATER JACKET

TIE SHIRT

DRESS Blouse shirt SKIRT

TROUSERS SHORTS BELT

SHORTS SLACKS

UNDERSHIRT T SHIRT UNDERSHORTS

SLIP PANTIES CORSET BRA LEOTARD

PAJAMAS

PAJAMAS GOWN

DENTURES: U. L. TRUSS

DENTURES: U. L.

MISCELLANEOUS

MISCELLANEOUS

VALUABLES

(List all money, jewelry, keys, personal papers & other valuables)

None

TST

RECEIVED BY Harshel Wells MORGUE ATTENDANT

WITNESS John Maldonado

REMOVED FROM M.E. OFFICE BY

BODY Floyd Benton REPRESENTING Portier FH

DATE 10-24-88 TIME 11:00 AM

CLOTHES Benton REPRESENTING Portier

DATE 10-24-88 TIME 11:00 AM

VALUABLES REPRESENTING

DATE TIME

DM

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...EDWARDS,.Erica..October.22,1988..1:15.p.m...Case No. 88-3075

CAUSE OF DEATH:

Acute Cocaine Intoxication

*see  
amendment  
JH Davis*

*Maria S. Conte, M.D.*  
Maria S. Conte, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

Date: 12-14-88

MSC:rf

METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY  
MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
Number One on Bob Hope Road, Miami, Florida 33136

TOXICOLOGY REPORT

EDWARDS, ERICA

M.E. CASE NO. 88-3075

<u>SUBSTANCE</u>	<u>SPECIMEN</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
VOLATILES	HEART BLOOD	UNDETECTED
BENZOYLECGONINE	URINE	DETECTED
BENZOYLECGONINE	SERUM	5.38mg/L
COCAINE	URINE	DETECTED
COCAINE	HEART BLOOD	1.31mg/L
METHYLECGONINE	HEART BLOOD	DETECTED
SALICYLATES	SERUM	UNDETECTED
CYANIDE	HEART BLOOD	UNDETECTED
DRUGS	GASTRIC	UNDETECTED

Maria S. Conte, M.D.  
Maria S. Conte, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

Date 11-21-88

*[Signature]*

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...EDWARDS,.Erica..October.22,1988..1:15.p.m...Case No. 88-3075

EXTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The body is that of a 5 foot 4 inch, 131 pound, well developed, poorly nourished black female consistent with the stated age of 24 years. The scalp is atraumatic and covered by short, black, curly hair. The irides are brown with equal and dilated pupils. Multiple petechiae are on both sclerae. The nose is unremarkable and free of any septal perforations or other abnormalities. The lips are free of any contusions or lacerations and the frenulum is intact. The mouth contains native dentition in poor repair. The left central upper incisor is absent. The neck has unremarkable external features. The chest is symmetric. The abdomen is flat. The extremities are well developed and without edema. The external genitalia are unremarkable and without contusions or lacerations. Several old healed superficial scars are scattered throughout both legs. Significant insect activity is on the medial aspect of both thighs and on the medial aspect of the left arm. A 1.5 centimeter superficial laceration is on the left buttock. No tattoos or other marks are observed on the body.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION:

The pleural, pericardial and peritoneal cavities are free of excessive fluid or adhesions.

The 300 gram heart has a normal amount of subepicardial fat and a right predominant coronary arterial system that is elastic and entirely free of atherosclerosis. The coronary arteries are in a normal distribution with the right coronary artery forming the posterior descending branch. Sectioning the heart discloses a firm, brown, homogeneous myocardium with no abnormalities. The heart valves are free of any vegetations or other abnormalities. The mural endocardium and coronary orifices are unremarkable. The aorta is unremarkable.

Serial sectioning of the tongue discloses a focal hemorrhagic area on the left side. The mucosal surface of the epiglottis has multiple petechiae. The lumen of the larynx and trachea is partially filled with foamy fluid, except for that the larynx and trachea are unremarkable externally and along the mucosal surfaces. The mainstem bronchi are unremarkable externally and along the mucosal surfaces.

A step-wise dissection of the neck reveals that the hyoid bone and thyroid cartilage are intact and the surrounding soft tissues and strap muscles of the neck are not hemorrhagic or severed.

THE DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT, Miami, Florida

Name...EDWARDS,.Erica..October.22,1988..1:15.p.m...Case No. 88-3075

The right and left lungs are 670 and 520 grams respectively. They are dusky blue-purple and sectioning discloses they are markedly edematous and congested.

The esophagus, stomach and intestines are unremarkable externally and along the mucosal surfaces. The stomach contains an estimated 30-40 cubic centimeters of semi-solid material with identifiable food particles.

The 1850 gram liver has a sharp anterior edge and a smooth capsule. It is pale brown and homogeneous throughout. The gallbladder is unremarkable and free of stones.

The 200 gram spleen has a wrinkled blue-gray capsule and a soft pale red cut surface without any visible lymphoid follicles. The lymph nodes throughout the body are markedly enlarged.

The right and left kidneys are 150 and 160 grams respectively. The external surfaces are smooth and dark brown. The cut surfaces are unremarkable with adequate corticomedullary definition. The ureters are unremarkable and lead to a urinary bladder containing approximately 2-3 cubic centimeters of yellow urine.

Examination of the internal genitalia fails to disclose any abnormalities. The left ovary has a hemorrhagic corpus luteum. Examination of the vagina, cervix and anal sphincter fails to disclose the presence of any contusions or lacerations.

Reflecting the scalp fails to disclose any contusions or other abnormalities. The 1300 gram brain is normally formed and entirely unremarkable upon serial sectioning. Stripping the dura from the skull and calvarium fails to disclose the presence of any fractures.

AUTOPSY FINDINGS:

1. Markedly edematous and congested lungs
2. Petechiae of the sclerae and epiglottis

*Maria S. Conte, M.D.*  
Maria S. Conte, M.D.  
Associate Medical Examiner

MSC:rf

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
(305) 545-2400

CASE INFORMATION

DATE 11 3 88  
mo. day yr.

1:25 PM  
time

88-3075  
M.E. Case #

Microscopic Description.

Heart: 2 micro sections are available for study that show unremarkable features. - The coronary artery showed is widely patent with no atherosclerotic lesions.

Lungs: one micro section is available for study that shows intraalveolar edema and hemorrhage, diffuse.

Liver: one micro section is available for study that shows unremarkable features.

Lymph nodes: 2 micro sections are available for study showing autolytic changes that preclude further evaluation.

Spleen: one micro section available for study that shows lymphoid hyperplasia and acute congestion. one lymphoid follicle appears to have necrotic debris.

Endometrium: one micro section available for study that shows autolytic changes that preclude further evaluation.

Thyroid gland: one micro section available for study that shows unremarkable features.

Kidneys: one micro section available for study that shows diffuse intertubular and interstitial collection of blood.

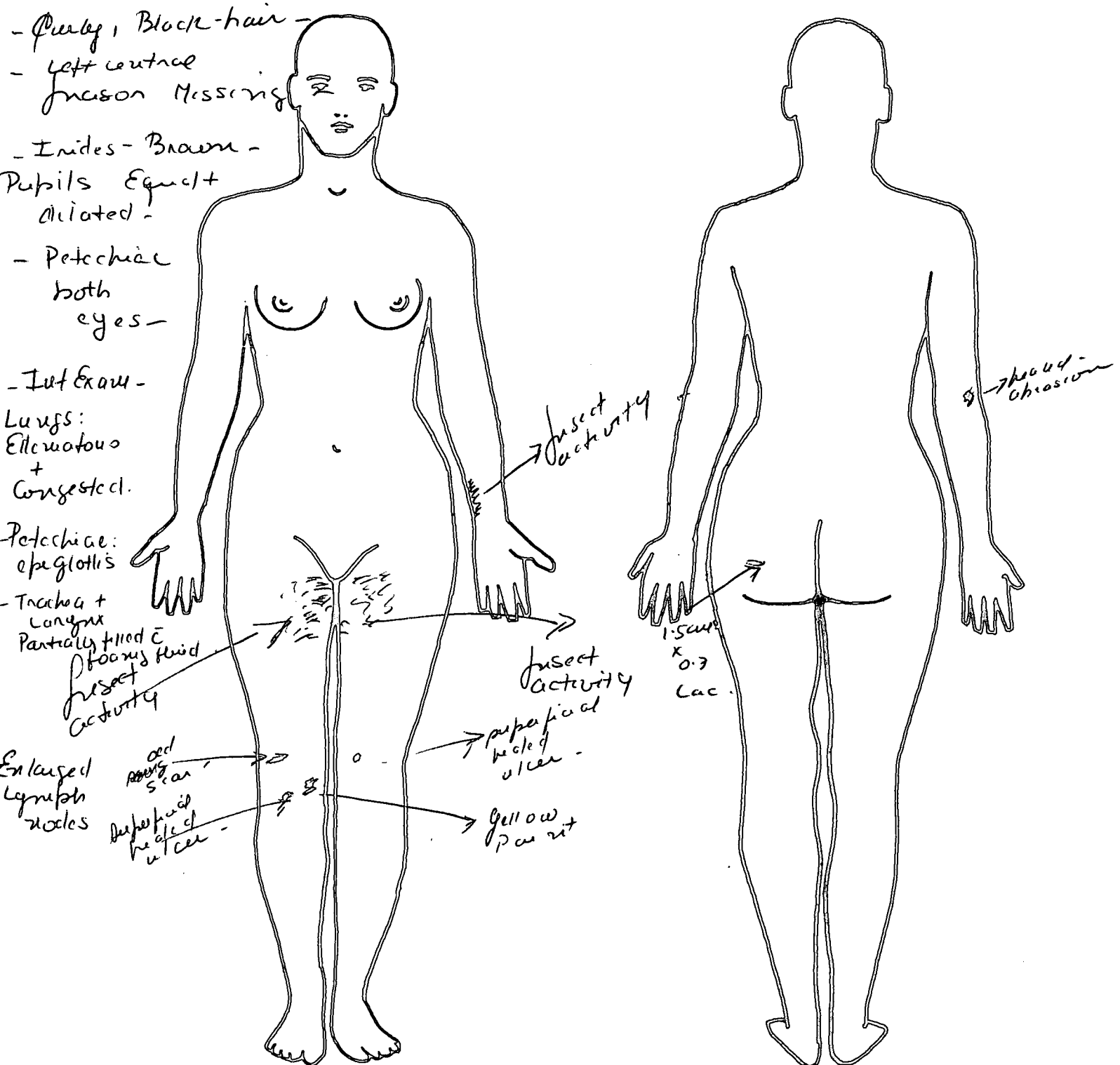


METROPOLITAN DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
1050 N.W. 19th Street  
Miami, Florida 33136

Full Body, Female, anterior and posterior views

Name Edwards Erica Autopsy No. 88-3075

Age 24 Race B Sex F Date 10/22/88



DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT

CLASSIFICATION OF PENDING CASE

(THIS FORM IS TO BE USED BY A MEDICAL EXAMINER WHEN A PENDING CASE IS TO BE CLASSIFIED. MAKE CERTAIN THAT THERE IS AN APPROVAL BY EITHER THE CHIEF OR DEPUTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER BEFORE COMPLETING THE NECESSARY FORMS AND CERTIFICATES REQUIRED BY THE STATE.)

M.E. Case # 88-3075

Name (if known) Edwards, Erica

Cause of Death:  
(Item 24)

Asphyxia

Due to:

Due to:

Contributory Cause:

Manner of Death:

(Item 27a) 1st homicide October 21-22, 1988 unknown time

How Incident Occurred:

(Item 27d) Found dead with evidence of external mouth pressure

Rationale for Classification:

1. Abundant female
2. Semi nude (breast - 1/2 open)
3. Sexual connotation
4. Cocaine in range of cocaine found in other cases of homicide
5. Lip pressure lesion, petechiae on glottis, conjunctival petech.
6. 1-1.3 epidemiological pattern of other cases - 19 cases

\_\_\_\_\_  
Medical Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_  
M - D - Y  
Date

Approved by

6/18/89

M - D - Y  
Date

CASE REVIEW  
J. H. DAVIS, M.D.

NAME: Edwards, Erica ME No.: 88-3075  
Age/Race: 24 B Police: MDPD  
Date Found: 10/22/88 Police No.: 538527-I Lefebvre  
Coordinates: NW 8 CT 79 ST.  
Site Character: Vacant field  
Position: Supine legs spread  
Clothing/Cover: Blue leotard, yellow blouse open,  
Preservation Status: Good  
Photos Eyes: Yes - Scattered petechiae  
" Lips: Yes - Horizontal mark lower lip from crown (upper tooth missing allowing lower lip to be pushed into space)  
" Ext. Neck: Yes - 5 (Focal hem. left side of throat)  
" Int. Neck: Yes - Petechiae epiglottis\* foam in subglottic area  
Cocaine Blood: 1.31 mg/L (Heart) 5.38 Benzyl/ce. serum  
" Other:  
Alcohol: Negative 171V +  
Other Drug:

TONGUE  
positive  
SO W/IN

EVIDENCE FOR  
HOMICIDE

ACCIDENT

Abandoned

Semi Nude

Seen with a man; Screams heard

Tooth crown mark lower lip = pressure

Cocaine hit

position does not  
suggest psychosis or  
seizure

perforated stomach?

\* Not described

## Already Classified as Homicide

- 1 88-3093 Black, B.
- 2 89-243 Spivey, A
- 3 89-906 Williams, A
- 4 89-997 Hernandez, B

## Well preserved - not decomposed bodies

- 1 87-2006 Samuels, W
- 2 87-2017 Taylor, M
- 3 87-2633 Rozier, E
- 4 88-1055 Gray, S
- 5 88-3075 Edwards, E
- 6 88-3119 Lattimore, B
- 7 88-3575 Burns, A
- 8 89-323 Stewart, L
- 9 89-981 Gooden, P

## Decomposed or insect altered bodies - including skeletons

- 1 86-2512 Turner, T
- 2 88-2596 Henderson, J
- 3 88-2637 Johnson, L
- 4 88-3118 Rolle, R
- 5 89-346 Harris, V
- 6 89-883 Bodie, C

6/18/89

88-3025

To D mck

Change time of incident to October 21-22, 1988  
Time unknown. She was in full rigor when  
found. Occurred probably late October 21 or  
early October 22. Evidence of time is not clear  
from record so far.

Change the sheet.

J. P. [unclear]

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
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CASE INFORMATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
mo. day yr.

time \_\_\_\_\_

88-3075  
M.E. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1989

THE MIAMI HERALD

SECTION B

# Dead women had links to rapist

By DONNA GEHRKE  
Herald Staff Writer

Where Charles Henry Williams went, women died.

Four were killed near his family home in Overtown. A fifth was a neighbor. Four more died in a North Dade prostitution zone where the tall baby-faced 32-year-old used to wander. Two others were found just outside the area. And two were murdered in a Brownsville neighborhood where he used to smoke crack.

Williams tells police it's coincidence.

Homicide detectives think it's a pattern.

Police say the convicted rapist is a suspect in these 13 slayings and five others, which date back more than two years. They called a press conference 2½ months ago to announce their suspicion. But they haven't yet charged



*Convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams, left, says connections to the dead women are a coincidence. Police see a pattern, but they haven't charged Williams with murder.*

Williams with murder.

The killings stopped once Williams was jailed last April on two unrelated rape charges.

"He's the best thing we've got," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wesolowski, who

heads his department's investigation into 11 of the deaths. "He is the No. 1 suspect."

In recent weeks, The Herald has found more links to Williams and the deaths. Court records and interviews with police, witnesses and victims' families show:

■ At least three victims were seen with Williams on the day they died.

■ Two women who pressed the current rape charges against Williams say he tried to choke them to death in Brownsville — the same neighborhood where two victims died, within the same few weeks.

■ Another woman filed attempted-murder charges against Williams for a choking attack just hours after she had introduced him to one of her friends — who later was found murdered.

■ Williams frequented the same places — a crack den, a prostitution zone — that several of the victims did.

Williams is scheduled to go to trial next week on the two rape charges. The trial might

PLEASE SEE WILLIAMS, 38

# 3 victims were seen with rapist the day they died

## WILLIAMS, FROM 1B

be postponed to give Williams' new court-appointed attorney, Howard Landau, a chance to prepare a defense.

Landau, who helped win an acquittal for Williams in a 1986 rape trial, won't comment on the case or the homicide investigation. Nor will he allow his client to speak to The Herald.

In statements to police, Williams has denied killing the women.

Born in Georgia, he grew up in a neatly kept Overtown townhouse with his mother, brother and sisters.

By 1986, he had been accused of seven rapes — including assaults on two 15-year-old schoolgirls — and was profiled in The Herald as a career criminal who knew how to plea bargain and beat the system.

His accusers describe the same modus operandi: He starts with sweet talk and suddenly turns vicious as he chokes his victims unconscious.

Two years ago when Williams was out of jail, young women started dying mysteriously in his Overtown neighborhood. They were found almost nude, their legs spread and no visible trauma.

Miami cops were puzzled. Initial autopsies turned up a new theory — later debunked by Medical Examiner Joe Davis — that the women died because they combined sex and co-



**VICTIM:** Brenda Hernandez was seen with Williams the day she was strangled.

caine once too often.

They were well-known in the Overtown neighborhood as heavy crack-users.

So was Williams.

"He'd say, 'I've got money. Let's get drugs,'" remembered neighbor Audrey Salles.

One of Williams' teen-age neighbors took him up on the offer in April 1988 — and was found dead hours later, said the victim's best friend, Aida Rodriguez, 17.

She said Williams offered her and 16-year-old Sharmanita Grays "some weed" when they went to the Bay Point Motel, 3530 Biscayne Blvd. Later, Rodriguez left her friend with a heavily perspiring, crack-using Williams who wouldn't let her back into the room.

That's the last time Rodriguez saw Grays alive. Her body was found hours later sprawled, legs apart and nearly nude, on a stairwell at the motel.

Rodriguez told Miami homicide investigators her suspicions. Miami police have since refused to discuss the case.

Since then, two other victims were seen with Williams on their last day.

In October 1988, Williams sought sex from prostitute Erica Edwards on the night she died near the hooker zone on Northwest 79th Street, said witness Beverly Gunder James.

She said Williams, identifying himself as "Tony," approached her on Oct. 22, 1988, at the Tropicana Bar, 1057 NW 79th St.

"He came out of the bushes," James said in a telephone interview.

"He asked me where I was going, and I said to the bar. He asked if I 'dated' [slang for hooking], and I said no. He asked if I smoked cocaine and I said no. He asked me if I knew anyone who did.

"I said yes — Erica."

She said she then introduced him

to Edwards.

"I said, 'Erica, this is Tony. He seems like a nice guy. Be nice to him.'"

The next morning, Edwards' body was discovered in a nearby field. She had been dead for hours.

That same day, James told police, Williams grabbed her from behind and choked her. "He picked me off the ground and put a hook on me and I couldn't spring loose," she said.

"The man was on top of me," she added. "I was on my stomach."

A neighbor saw the attack and scared him off, she said.

Five days later — and after three more women had been found dead in the area — James spotted Williams at a friend's house near the hooker zone.

Metro police arrested him there on attempted second-degree murder charges.

He was released in early December after prosecutors dropped the case. They couldn't find James. She moved to Oklahoma soon after the assault.

Five months later, Williams was seen with victim Brenda Hernandez on the day she was strangled in an open field in Brownsville, police told her mother, Mercedes Hernandez.

The victim had lived just a few blocks from a crack den near J & J Groceries at 2656 NW 46th St. where Williams hung out.

Two other victims, Barbara Ann

Black and Barbara Lattimore, hung out at the same crack den, several witnesses said. "He liked the girls," remembered store owner John Bennett.

Williams was arrested at the crack den when he tried to run from detectives investigating Hernandez's murder.

While canvassing the neighborhood for witnesses, detectives ran into a woman who said Williams had raped her in the same neighborhood two weeks earlier.

She said she was initially fooled by his appearance. "A clean-cut guy," she noted.

She agreed to Williams' offer: \$10, two cocaine rocks and half a pound of marijuana for sex. The next thing she knew, he was choking her and forcing her to have sex.

"The man chokes you like he intends to kill you. It's not a choke where he's playing with you at all. He wants to kill you," she said in a

sworn statement.

"The look on the guy's face — it totally changed from that nice personality, nice gentleman, hard-working gentleman to a damn maniac," she testified.

Metro detectives charged Williams with rape.

Within a week, Miami police followed with another rape charge. A woman from Brownsville accused Williams of choking and raping her in March.

Since early April, Williams has been in jail, lately in solitary.

"He's there for his own protection based on his notoriety," said Dade Jail Lt. Jim Wood.

Williams passes his days watching TV or talking to another prisoner — Charlie Street, accused killer of two Metro officers.

Williams has impressed Lt. Wood with his politeness and quiet demeanor. "He seems calm and complacent."

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
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CASE INFORMATION

DATE 4 11 89 -  
mo. day yr.

5:20 PM.  
time

88-3075  
M.E. Case #

Re: Erica Edwards -

I called Det. Leforne in Reference to case 88-8075 (Erica Edwards). Det. Leforne was not in his office. Left a message to call me back. At Pca suggestion of Dr. Davis I will try to review this case and will discuss the background information and circumstances of death with Det. Leforne again..

MSC



day yr.

# Rapist questioned in 17 deaths

• • Tuesday, May 16, 1989 / The Miami Herald 3B

## Rapist is suspect in deaths case

### SUSPECT / from 1B

found near where 24-year-old Brenda Hernandez was killed with a blunt object at Northwest 46th Street and 23rd Avenue.

Police took him into custody after he gave "false information" about his name and was found to be carrying a crack pipe in his pocket, they said.

Within a few hours of his arrest, Williams also was charged with the March rape and robbery of a prostitute. Another victim later identified the convict in a photo lineup as the man who a month earlier pinned her in a choke hold and then dragged her to an open field where he raped her.

Williams is being arraigned in those two rape cases this morning. He is being held without bail at the Dade County Stockade.

Meanwhile, Metro and Miami police are investigating Williams' possible role in the 17 deaths that began in 1986. Almost all of the victims were found lying on their backs, partially nude and in open fields or abandoned houses. Their blood showed traces of cocaine, and crack paraphernalia was found near-

say.

Records show Williams served only four months of that sentence in the stockade. He was released in time for Christmas 1986.

Five months later, he was in trouble again.

Miami police arrested him in May 1987 after a woman reported she had been beaten on her legs, face and neck in an attack at Northwest First Court and 14th Street. She described her assailant, and police found Williams in the area.

However, the aggravated battery charge was lessened to a misdemeanor.

In the same area a day later, another woman said Williams attacked her. The Miami police report said Williams "had his hand on her neck and was choking her while the victim was trying to get away."

The attacker ended up stealing \$25 from the victim.

Williams was arrested, but those charges were later dropped.

He was out on the streets in time to be accused of a mid-May attack in 1988.

### Choke hold used

building at 217 NW 8th St.

Police have never been able to find the man.

Witnesses were too high on drugs or alcohol to identify him, Watterson said.

Williams is suspected because he lived in the neighborhood at 921 NW Seventh Ave., the sergeant said.

Although an autopsy revealed bruises around her neck, medical examiners weren't able to detect trauma that would lead to Spires' death, Watterson said.

"There's no physical evidence," he said.

Today, Williams will be in court facing charges based on the com-

plaints of two women who told police Williams raped them in much the same way: He grabbed them from behind, choked them until they were unconscious and raped them in vacant areas.

Then he threatened to kill them if they told police.

Both identified Williams from photo lineups.

Prosecutor Dennis Siegel said Williams faces life in prison if convicted as charged of sexual battery with great force.

Three days before Williams was arrested and jailed without bail, the body of Peggy Gooden, the 17th woman to die mysteriously, was found at 9641 NW 27th Ave.

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mo. day yr.

time \_\_\_\_\_

M.E. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Miami homicide Sgt. Thomas Watterson also noted that Williams could not have killed all the women, because he was in jail when some of the 17 died.

Williams was profiled in 1986 in The Herald as a career criminal who knew how to beat the system. Although at that time he had been accused of rape by seven women and had been treated as a "mentally disordered sex-offender" for a 1977 conviction, the rest of his cases had ended in acquittals or charges had been dropped or reduced.

"The alleged victims of Charles Henry Williams tell much the same story: The tall, baby-faced man begins with smiles and small talk, then suddenly turns vicious, chokes them and rapes them," according to the profile published Aug. 27, 1986.

"Each time Williams has been arrested," the story continued, "the 30-year-old bus mechanic with a soft voice and gentle manner offers the same explanation he will bring to court today. 'There was no rape. I'm going to beat this.'"

The day after the article, Williams plea-bargained on a sexual assault case to receive a 364-day jail sentence.

"He's very much a professional," said a Miami police detective who investigated one of the cases never prosecuted said in 1986. "He knows how to manipulate it. He knows what he can say and what he can't

Attacker scared off

A friend of the victim scared the man off. The victim later told police she thinks she would have been killed if her friend had not been there.

Within a few hours, just three blocks away, prostitute Erica Edwards, 24, died one of the 17 unexplained deaths.

Her body, naked above the waist, was found in a vacant field at Northwest 79th Street and Eighth Court. There were no signs of violence on her body.

Three other women died mysteriously in the area before Williams was arrested Oct. 28.

● Barbara Ann Black, 25, was found Oct. 24 in a front yard at 7310 NW 18th Ave.

● Barbara Lattimore was found at 2700 NW 87th St. Oct. 27.

● Robin Renee Rolle, 29, was discovered in an open field at Northwest 79th Street and 14th Court.

Metro police would not talk about any of these cases.

But Miami's Sgt. Watterson said Williams was a "good suspect" in the death of Anita Spires, who died Jan. 22.

Watterson said Spires' body was found after police raided an abandoned building for gambling and drugs. Spires was found dead five minutes after police noticed she was having sex with a man outside of the

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M.E. Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Authorities still have not ruled out that many of the 17 women may have died from a combination of highs from sex and crack cocaine — although Medical Examiner Joseph Davis said last week that the pattern of the women's deaths indicates homicide.

**Sex offenders studied**

Police have been scanning records to find convicted sexual offenders who raped in the inner city. Williams fits that description.

A Metro homicide sergeant recently theorized that the women may have suffocated from a penis forced down their mouths.

Forensic dentist Dr. Richard Souviron confirmed he had examined Williams' sexual organs about three weeks ago for bite marks and is trying to determine if there is any evidence that links him to the 17 deaths. Souviron and other medical examiners are also looking for signs of trauma or other traces that could determine if the women were slain.

Williams told Dade Stockade Lt. William Smith last Friday that he had been questioned about the deaths.

"He was worried about getting hurt if other inmates found out about it," Smith said.

The lieutenant said he could not allow a reporter to interview Williams until a public defender is appointed to represent him. The public defender's office said Williams should be assigned an attorney today at the arraignment.

Metro detectives chief John Farrell, who has helped direct the investigation into the 17 women's deaths, was out of town and could not be reached for comment Monday. But he cautioned late last week that investigators were looking at several suspects and that his agency had no major suspect.

Tonya Folsom, a neighbor of Williams, said he grabbed her in a choke hold and dragged her to a bathroom where he cut her throat with a knife.

As in other cases where Williams had been accused of violence against women, he had been friendly, even offering Folsom some crack cocaine, she said in a deposition.

They smoked it in her boyfriend's upstairs apartment while he was at work and her baby was asleep in another room.

Williams left, but returned shortly afterward.

"I was like surprised to see him," Folsom said in the deposition.

"He grabbed me around the neck. From behind. I blanked out. The only thing I remember . . . I was trying to pull his arms but I couldn't."

The next thing she knew she was on the bathroom floor. "I saw the shadow of the knife," she testified in the deposition. "I remember him hitting me. I felt when he cut my throat. I jumped straight up."

Another man heard the sounds and scared the attacker off. Police later arrested Williams on attempted second-degree murder charges, but those charges were dropped.

So were charges brought against him last October by a woman who said he tried to kill her.

The police report said the victim was walking west on Northwest 80th Street from Seventh Avenue early Oct. 22 when she heard a male voice say, "Hey, lady, come over here."

"As she continued to walk, she heard footsteps behind her. When the victim turned around to see who was behind her, the defendant grabbed the victim from behind, placing her in a choke hold," the report said. "The defendant choked the victim until she was unconscious and then dragged her to nearby bushes."

# Coroner: Somebody killed 19 women

By ROSEMARY GOUDREAU  
Herald Staff Writer

On a second look, the Dade Medical Examiner's Office has found a common thread in the mysterious deaths of 19 young Miami women over the past 2½ years — murder.

Medical Examiner Joseph Davis personally re-examined autopsy reports and photographs of the women's bodies and released a report Tuesday that says someone applied pressure to the necks or mouths of many of the victims.

The six-page report does not mention the two unusual theories his department had offered to explain the deaths: that a small amount of cocaine combined with sexual intercourse killed them, or that the women choked to death during oral sex.

The women, all black except for one Hispanic, have been found dead since December 1986 in outside areas of Dade — open fields, behind buildings, in the bushes. All were found lying on their backs with their skirts

pulled up or their pants pulled down, their legs spread apart. All were found between downtown Miami and Northwest 102nd Street, except for one found in Hialeah.

Initially, the medical examiner's office said the bodies showed no sign of trauma — no bruises, no needle marks, no signs of a struggle. Only recently did they suggest the possibility that somebody was killing them.

The Davis report changes that.

"It is my considered conclusion that the re-

petitive pattern of body position, location and scene circumstances constitute a reasonable conclusion as to manner of death — homicide," Davis wrote.

Only nine of the women's bodies were found soon enough after death to allow detailed studies of the skin, but seven of them showed "subtle evidence" of "carefully ap-

PLEASE SEE SLAYINGS, 3B

## Examiner: Somebody killed 19 women

SLAYINGS, FROM 1B

plied neck pressure," Davis wrote.

Four of the nine showed "mild or moderate pressure to the mouth," he reported.

"It is not at all difficult to inflict enough neck pressure to result in helplessness and loss of consciousness within seconds," he wrote. "A weakened or unsuspecting victim may be fatally incapacitated with little or no residual signs of physical injury."

Davis did not return phone calls to his office Tuesday.

John Farrell, chief of detectives for the Metro-Dade Police Department, said his department is keeping "an open mind" about the deaths since no specific cause has been rendered. His department has always investigated the cases as though they were homicides, he said.

"There's a lot of this we don't understand and we don't have the answers," Farrell said. "Davis is saying, 'It's my feeling this is homicide, and I'm the boss.'"

"He's not saying that absolutely,

this is the way these women were killed. He's talking about subtle evidence. . . . Anything is possible, but you're not doing this in some clinical situation where the exact pressure points will be touched. These are live people, streetwise people. We have still not established a very specific manner of death," he said.

Farrell isn't ready to dismiss the theory that a small amount of cocaine combined with sexual stimulation killed some of the women. According to the theory, initially put forth by Deputy Dade Medical Examiner Charles Wetli, the combina-

tion can set off a fatal nervous reaction in run-down people who regularly abuse drugs.

"We certainly don't discount it totally at this point in time when we don't have other than 'subtle evidence' of injuries," Farrell said.

Still, the department continues to look for people with a history of beating up prostitutes or women around crack houses, he said. One of the homicide sergeants leaves today for the FBI Behavioral Profile bureau in Quantico, Va. The agency keeps a data base and has behavior analysts who might help investigators figure out the type of killer, or killers, they might be looking for.

Investigators have questioned convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams in with the deaths. Williams, held at the Dade County jail on unrelated rape charges, has a history of choking his victims to unconsciousness.

"The important thing is that the general public does not seem to be at risk here," said Farrell. "In most of these cases, it's associated with people in the crack-house environment. It doesn't make the death any less a death. It's important. But we don't want to alarm the public at large."

*Miami Herald*

5/21/89



C.W. GRIFFIN / Miami Herald Staff

**LOST THEIR MOTHER:** One victim was Barbara Lattimore, who left daughters Shantavia, 3, left, and Shadedra, 6. Now their grandmother is trying to raise them on a meager income.

## 18 killings leave families struggling with uncertainty

By **DONNA GEHRKE**  
Herald Staff Writer

Fourteen-year-old Antoinette Burns jogged, earned a white belt in karate and went to movies.

Sharmanita Grays, 16, went out for cheerleading in junior high but later dropped out of school.

Barbara Lattimore, 22, had two young daughters and tried to care for them, despite her crack habit.

About the only thing the three had in common was murder.

They are among the 18 young Dade women who the FBI believes were slain by a serial killer who hated women.

After a preliminary analysis, the FBI's Behavioral Profile Bureau in Quantico, Va., has told local investi-

gators that the deaths appear to be similar and conducted by one person.

"No one wants to scare people, but we could have a serial killer," said Metro homicide Sgt. Frank Wesolowski, who heads the county's investigation.

Since main suspect Charles Henry Williams — a convicted rapist — was jailed in early April on two unrelated rape charges, no woman has been found dead like the other victims. Investigators say they do not have enough proof to charge him with even one homicide.

"We're still investigating everything," said Miami homicide detective Tony Rodriguez, who is in charge

PLEASE SEE MURDERS, 5B

# Homicide victims' families left in limbo

## MURDERS, FROM 1B

of the Miami operation.

Williams has denied any involvement in the deaths. His lawyer, assistant public defender Steven Potolsky, also said he couldn't talk about the investigation.

Late last month, Dade Medical Examiner Joseph Davis re-examined autopsy reports and photographs of 19 women's bodies and concluded someone had applied pressure to the necks or mouths of many of the victims. He is reclassifying the deaths to homicide — if they hadn't been already.

Police do not believe one of those victims is linked with the 18 others. The September 1986 death of Tammy Turner offers few clues since her body was found decomposed. But investigators said the death scene appears slightly different from the rest. Also, Williams was in jail at the time of her death.

The 18 other victims, all black except for one Hispanic, have been found dead since July 1987 with their skirts pulled up or their pants pulled down. Almost all had their legs spread apart. All were found between downtown Miami and Northwest 102nd Street, except for one found in Hialeah.

Medical examiners still aren't sure exactly how the women died.

The uncertainty has added more agony for many of the victims' families.

The family of Sharmanita Grays had to wait more than a year before Davis reversed an assistant's decision that the teen-ager died from a dose of sex and cocaine.

When Sharmanita was found dead in April 1988, her family told Miami police they suspected murder. A sister, Harriette Grays, said they even had a suspect — Charles Henry Williams.



C.W. GRIFFIN / Miami Herald Staff

**WAITING FOR ANSWERS:** Learlean Rahming, mother of victim Antoinette Burns, can't file an insurance claim without a completed death certificate.

Sharmanita had been with Williams, a neighbor, the night she died at a Biscayne Boulevard motel. Two witnesses, a motel clerk and the 16-year-old's best friend, backed up the family's story.

"The police never did anything. They never came back," Harriette Grays said. "They act like they don't care. They don't tell my mama anything."

Detective Rodriguez said he could not discuss individual cases, but he defended the city investigations as thorough and aggressive.

Harriette said her family saw Williams roam freely throughout the

neighborhood after Sharmanita's death.

"He used to walk around here. I couldn't take it. I just left," she said.

Sharmanita was her favorite sister.

She had been a junior high cheerleader who dropped out of school when she joined in with the wrong bunch of girls, Harriette Grays said.

"She was shaped nice, she jumped the best of the cheerleaders, she was a great dancer. She was a pretty black girl. A lot of people liked her," her sister remembered.

The family of victim Barbara "Rabbit" Lattimore also have suffered from waiting.



**YOUNGEST VICTIM:** Antoinette Burns' death was different.

They still have not received a completed death certificate, eight months after the 22-year-old woman was found dead at a closed drive-in movie theater at 2700 NW 87th St.

Missing from the form is a cause of death.

An insurance company is refusing to pay a claim until the cause is listed. That may be weeks more, said the victim's mother, Annie.

"The hardest part is trying to catch up on the funeral," she added. "It cost about \$3,000. Last month, we finished paying it off. But that threw us behind in our rent."

She said she also is struggling to

support Lattimore's daughters, ages 3 and 6, on an \$86-a-month welfare check the government provides for the two girls.

A social worker said the grandmother cannot receive more since she is already receiving a check for another daughter's six children.

Annie Lattimore said she relied on her daughter to help cook meals, clean house and tend the children. Even though her daughter was addicted to crack, she managed to be a great help, the mother added.

Now, she said, "it's hard on me."

Like many other parents, she believes her daughter was abducted. She was last seen getting into a car with a man.

Williams pops up in Lattimore's case as well.

He hung out at the same corner crack den where Lattimore went, said her sister Gail Griffin.

The sister, who called herself a friend of Williams, said he came over a couple of times to their home. She said she didn't know if Williams knew her sister.

Meanwhile, the family of the youngest victim, Antoinette Burns, is also waiting to receive a completed death certificate to collect insurance money.

She was last seen alive last Dec. 11 after she hitched a ride with a neighbor to go to the movies. She was let out near the Scott Projects. The next day, her body was found under a tree 26 blocks north.

"For a while, I was out there investigating myself," said her mother, Learlean Rahming. "I used to go out every morning from my house to Northwest 62nd Street where she disappeared. I tried to find the guy she knew. If anybody had seen her in the area. But nobody knows nothing."

Antoinette was a boy-crazy teenager who was trying to decide what school she wanted to attend, her mother said. Before she returned to her grandmother's Opa-locka home, she had been staying with an aunt in

a small town in Florida. Her family sent her there because she had been running with a bad pack of girls.

From the start, her family suspected foul play.

For weeks, they stubbornly fought off police and medical examiner's theories that Antoinette, along with many other victims, had died from a dose of crack cocaine and sex.

"I kept telling them that my child didn't do drugs," said Rahming. "But no one was listening to me."

"Walking to the bushes to have sex?" added Antoinette's grandmother, Thelma Rahming. "Not Antoinette. That sounds kind of strange."

At the funeral, they noticed that her lips were swollen "like somebody had hit her or something," Learlean said.

They also protested that Antoinette wasn't a convicted prostitute like some of the other victims.

Authorities started listening to the family when no cocaine was found in Antoinette.

That was the break some detectives needed to present their own theories that a killer was at work.

"It just didn't feel right," said Wesolowski, a veteran homicide investigator who leads a team of Metro detectives.

All the women's death scenes — many of them including torn clothing and missing shoes — pointed to homicide, he said.

"You get certain vibes when you look at different scenes," he said. "It's like when you're approaching a drug suspect who's wearing designer jeans, a beeper and gold jewelry. You just know."

Last week, both the investigator and Antoinette's mother were interviewed for the nationally syndicated program *A Current Affair*.

Although they've never met, their hopes, to be spread throughout the nation in the episode, were the same. They want to end the mystery.



# Cops: Rapist top suspect in murders

## But no charges filed in 19 deaths

By **DONNA GEHRKE**  
Herald Staff Writer

For the first time, Metro-Dade police confirmed Monday that convicted rapist Charles Henry Williams is the main suspect in some of the 19 inner-city murders of Dade women.

However, police still do not have enough evidence to charge Williams with any murders. "We've exhausted all leads," Homicide Bureau Cmdr. Wayne McCarthy said.

"It's not like anyone has left a calling card or footprint or anything like that," he added. "We're making every effort we can."

McCarthy said his investigators are looking at two other suspects. One is suspected of killing the first victim, Tammie Turner, who died in September 1986 while Williams was in jail. The other is a convicted sex offender, but McCarthy said his investigators are not investigating him as intensely as they are Wil-



**CHARLES WILLIAMS: Police link him to some of 19 deaths.**

liams. He would not disclose those suspects' names.

Investigators have said privately that Williams, 32, is their suspect for all the slayings but Turner's.

McCarthy said Williams "is a main suspect in some of them," adding he could speak only about the 11 cases his agency is investigating. Hialeah and Miami police detectives in charge of the others could not be reached for comment after McCarthy's press conference.

PLEASE SEE SUSPECT, 2B

Miami Herald  
June 20, 1989

DATE  
mo. day yr

## Cops suspect rapist, lack evidence

**SUSPECT, FROM 1B**

thys afternoon press conference.

McCarthy said witnesses have linked Williams with four of Metro's victims.

"He knew them or he dated them," McCarthy said. "Or he did drugs with them."

Family and witnesses have also tied Williams to the Miami homicide of Sharmanita Grays, 16, a neighbor of Williams in Overtown.

Since Williams was jailed in early April on two unrelated rape charges, no woman has been found dead like the other victims.

Williams has denied involvement in any of the deaths.

McCarthy said police have not ruled out that some of the victims died accidentally. But he acknowledged that the theory the women died from a lethal combination of sex and cocaine — which has been rejected by Dade Medical Examiner Joseph Davis — is "on the back burner."

burner."

Davis said Monday it is only a matter of paper work before his office classifies all the women's deaths as homicides. Some of the deaths had remained unclassified for months before Davis led his own investigation and concluded all 19 victims were murdered.

In some cases, the women had been clearly asphyxiated, he said. "You could stand 10 feet away, it's that clear," he added. In others, the bodies were so decomposed that medical examiners couldn't determine an exact cause of death.

McCarthy said his office is waiting for a written report from the FBI's Behavioral Profile Bureau in Quantico, Va., which will take weeks to complete.

After a preliminary analysis, the bureau told local investigators that the 18 deaths, excluding Turner's, appear to be similar and committed by one person.

CASE INFORMATION

DADE COUNTY MEDICAL EXAMINER DEPARTMENT  
NUMBER ONE ON BOB HOPE ROAD, MIAMI, FL 33136-1133  
(305) 545-2400

M.E. Case #

Nov. 6, 1989

Miami Herald

88-3075

## Suspect is linked to 19th slaying

By DONNA GEHRKE  
Herald Staff Writer

Charles Henry Williams, already the prime suspect in the slayings of 18 inner-city women, has been linked to the murder of another: a



20-year-old who, like three other victims, was "seen" with him on her last day alive.

Sandra Jackson, only four foot eight and 84 pounds, was alone with six-foot-three Wil-

liams, a convicted rapist known for choking his victims, on March 23 after the two had visited with Jackson's cousin. Her body was found the next day in a wooded vacant lot at Northwest 13th Place and 38th Street.

Williams "was one of the last individuals seen with her alive," said

PLEASE SEE WILLIAMS, 2B



# Convicted rapist linked to 19th slaying

WILLIAMS, FROM 1B

Tony Rodriguez, Miami homicide detective.

Like many of the 18 other victims, Jackson was found nude and asphyxiated in Northwest Dade, lying on her back with her legs spread.

Homicide detectives believe Williams, a baby-faced former maintenance worker, may be responsible for the 19 slayings — and perhaps more — because the methods of murder are strikingly similar.

"We've never had this many that seemed to fall into a pattern," said Dr. Joseph Davis, Dade's medical examiner.

Williams, 33, has been in the Dade County Jail for the past six months but has not been charged in any of the murders. He was charged with two counts of rape unrelated to the slayings. Metro and Miami homicide detectives say they don't have enough proof — even though the first murder came under investigation more than a year ago.

Williams has admitted to police that he knew some of the victims, but he has steadfastly denied killing anyone.

The slayings stopped once Williams was jailed in early April on the rape charges.

The first of the 19 victims — 18 of them black and one Hispanic — was found dead in July 1987.

Jackson was victim No. 15. The bodies of four other women were found before Williams was arrested in early April. Miami police did not disclose Jackson's connection to Williams and the other homicide victims until detectives recently gave depositions in court.

Jackson, a former cook in a sandwich shop, went by the name Sonia because she hated her given name. "She was my sweet baby," said her boyfriend Kirk Stevens, the father of her 2-year-old son, also named Kirk.

Like many of the other 18 victims, Jackson was a drug addict "doing tricks for crack," her family told investigators.

Just before her murder, she was desperately trying to break her

crack habit, said Vincent Lawrence, a distant relative who unsuccessfully tried to find a rehabilitation program for her. "I couldn't find anything free for her," he said.

On March 24, a man working in his yard found Jackson's strangled body next door in an overgrown lot in the Brownsville neighborhood. A brown coat covered her nude body. Her shoes were found nearby.

In the next 11 days, four more bodies of women were found. Two of them had been badly beaten and strangled, as Jackson was.

On March 26, the body of Angela Williams, 23, was found in an open field at Northwest 21st Avenue and 68th Street. The killer had beaten her face, breaking her jaw and teeth.

A week later, in another vacant lot at Northwest 23rd Avenue and 46th Street, children found the body of Brenda Hernandez, 24, whose chest and neck were battered like Jackson's.

Williams was picked up near the Hernandez murder site by homicide detectives a day after the body was found.

As in Jackson's case, witnesses saw Williams with Hernandez on the last day of her life.

Jailers later found scratches on Williams' back and fresh bite marks on his penis.

Metro homicide detective Joseph McMahon said Williams readily talked to homicide detectives.

Investigators said Williams told them he had been with some of the victims — but they were alive when he left them.

He said people in the neighborhood who say he is the murderer are picking on him. They didn't like him, Williams complained.

From canvassing Brownsville after the murders, police found at least two women who said they had survived attacks by Williams. The investigators and the alleged victims described the attacks in recent depositions.

One, an admitted prostitute, told McMahon that she had been raped and choked to unconsciousness in March by a man known on the streets as "Bumper" or "Bump."

McMahon showed her a Polaroid of Williams.

"That's him, she said.

She said she hadn't gone to police sooner because she didn't think officers "give a damn about street hookers or prostitutes," McMahon said in a deposition.

The second victim said she was raped by Williams in the Brownsville neighborhood on March 18, six days before Jackson's body was found.

"She said at first he had grabbed her in a choke hold, putting his arm around her neck," Miami homicide detective Frank Castillo said in a deposition. "She said that he had her under control. She couldn't get away from him. The harder she would try to push away, the tighter the choke would get around her neck."

The two women pressed rape charges against Williams. He is scheduled to go to trial Nov. 13. But the trial is likely to be postponed for a third time. Prosecutor Dennis Siegel is planning to be out of the state that week to attend a seminar.

Meanwhile, police remain close-mouthed about the homicide investigation.

Williams' defense attorney, Howard Landau, believes homicide in-

vestigators are now conducting genetic DNA tests to see if they can trace back to Williams any body fluids found on the victims. The tests are usually done to connect rapists to their victims, usually through semen.

Despite Landau's objections, the Dade state attorney's office recently obtained a court order to take blood and saliva samples from Williams.

Miami homicide detective Rodriguez wouldn't talk about the genetic tests. "We're following up every avenue that's available to us that can assist us in these investigations," he said.

Rodriguez and John Farrell, Metro chief of detectives, said officers have pursued dozens of leads without the breakthrough they were counting on.

"Unfortunately, we haven't been able to put together anything of significance," Rodriguez said. "It's just a shame. It's a tragedy. I really feel that somebody out there saw or heard something that could help us solve at least one of these cases."

"Serial killers don't stop killing," he said. "They either get arrested, they die or they move somewhere and continue."



## RELEASE OF CASE MATERIALS

Date 01-23-90  
Month Day Year

M.E. Case # 88-3075 Deceased Name Erica Edwards

☐ Autopsy Report  
☐ Slide Duplication / Photo  
☒ 6 Pages  
☐ Verification of Death  
☐ Glass Micro Slides  
☐ Micro Slide Case

Release to (Receiving Party Please Print):

Name Dennis Gehlke

Address Herald

Signature of Receiving Party Dennis Gehlke

Official Receipt # \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks:

Released By \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

CASE REVIEW  
J. H. DAVIS, M.D.

NAME Edwards, Erica M.E. No. 88 3075  
AGE/RACE 24 B/F POLICE MDPD 8  
DATE FOWN 10/22/88 POLICE NUMBER 538527-2  
COORDINATES NW 8th Av 79 St. DETECTIVE L. Febure  
SITE CHARACTER Field  
POSITION Supine legs apart  
CLOTHING/COVER Bathing suit 100% cotton blouse open  
PRESERVATION STATUS good  
PHOTOS: Eyes yes Petechiae  
Lips Pressure marks  
Ext. Neck  
Int. Neck Petechiae + hemorrhage  
BITE MARKS (IF APPLICABLE)  
OTHER PERTINENT MARKS

INITIAL CLASSIFICATION  
→ Cocaine A

SUBSEQUENT CLASSIFICATION  
→ Asphyxia 19

INJURY of Above NOT PHOTOGRAPHED:

COCAINE - BLOOD

1.31 mg/L

- Other

Benz. sem 5.38 mg/L

Alcohol 0

Other Drug 0

Rape kit Status

EVIDENCE FOR

HOMICIDE

NON-HOMICIDE

Abundant P  
Leukocytes - blood upon